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The Most Popular Book in the World

By

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"The Sinner and His Savior"
"History of the Evangelical Association"
"Life and Labors of Bishop John Seybert"
"Rays of Light On The High Way to Success"
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for the
Evangelical Association
CLEVELAND OHIO

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FOREWORD

THIS little treatise is the substance of an address delivered, without notes, before a number of larger gatherings of young people and adult Bible classes in various sections of the country. It is hereby published in response to repeated requests, in the hope that it may encourage and stimulate many to study with more reverence and enthusiasm the "The Most Popular Book in the World."

The Most Popular Book in the World

NO one needs to be told to which book the title of this little treatise refers. Every one knows without being told that there is only one book of which this is true. No other book is or can be in question. That simple fact is itself significant. Sir Walter Scott, on his deathbed at Abbotsford, asked his friend Lockhart to read to him. "What book shall I read?" asked Lockhart. And Sir Walter replied, "Why do you ask that question? There is but one book; bring me the Bible." As Agnes Mitchell paraphrases the incident in Lowland brogue:

"Fetch me the Buke, dear Lockhart
And gie me ane sweet ward.
What buke? There is nae ither,—
The Life o' th' Incarnate Laird;
I feel the shadows creepin'
My Licht's nae burnin' lang;
Sae read frae the blessed Gospels
A bit, chiel, ere I gang;
Fin' whaur He helpit the needy,
His pity wi' His micht!
O, my soul's fair hungry, Lockhart,
For the Livin' Bread, the nicht."

There is only one book that one should want in a dying hour, and that is, therefore, also the best book for any other hour of life, for every circumstance and need of the soul, for all classes and conditions of men. This great, broad, vital fact challenges attention, demands explanation.

Here is an ancient library of books, constituting the oldest literature in the world; a book containing the truest history, the most faithful biography, the sweetest poetry, the

most enduring hymnology the world has ever seen, expressing and enshrining in immortal verse the holiest and noblest thought of the most religious people of antiquity. It is the survival of the fittest in literature. One can speak only in superlatives of this superlative Book.

Professor Seiss well says: "It is the oldest of books. Its histories go back to the beginnings of the race. Its grand sections were read in sacred assemblies nearly 1,000 years before Thales, Pythagoras and Confucius. David sung before Homer recited his verses or Lycurgus gave laws. Dozens of its documents were complete 100 years before Athens had a public library, and numbers of the ancient prophets had ended their messages before Socrates and Plato propounded their philosophies."

This book has passed through a series of vicissitudes and trials such as no other book has been required to undergo. It has not always been popular. The sinister shadows of ignorance and sin have sometimes obscured its light. But it has survived every eclipse. For centuries it suffered neglect. And these centuries synchronize with the dark ages. It has been persecuted, maligned, burned at the stake, cast into prison, chained to the wall of monasteries. It has been ruthlessly dissected by unsympathetic and even hostile criticism; it has been misunderstood, its teachings misapplied; schools of thought have arisen upon variant interpretations, and ecclesiastical organizations have warred for generations over the questions of interpretation which divided them; it has been the battle-ground

of fierce and prolonged contention between great and honest souls and their camp followers; it has been at once the storm-center and arsenal of theological controversy for ages.

Dr. Albert Barnes says of it: "No book has ever excited so much opposition as this; but it has survived every attack which power, talent and eloquence have ever made upon it. No army ever survived so many battles; no ancient bulwark has endured so many sieges, and stood so firm amid the thunders of war and the ravages of time; and no rock has been swept by so many currents and has stood unmoved. It has outlived all conflicts and survived all changes."

Its moral standards are absolutely unique in their loftiness and perfection. It is unchallenged in its uncompromising attitude toward sin.

Indeed, if it were not for this Book the world would not know that there is sin, or what sin is. The human conscience never had such another judge or censor as this Book. Amid all the changing order of society, in the midst of all the corruptions of industrial and political life, in the face of all the lowering of ethical standards, and all the confusion incident to the abnormal rapidity and radical nature of our current readjustments, this old Book, holding its throne of power, still thunders against wrong, serenely holds its ancient standard high, and sternly rebukes the sins of this age, as it has the sins of every former age. In rugged strength it goes on its conquering way, unaffected by the spineless, vacillating dilettanteism of our modern society.

Yet this most ancient of all literatures, this high, stern monitor of righteousness, which derives its moral tone from Sinai and Calvary, is to-day the most widely circulated, and frequently read book in the world. In a literary age, when everybody reads, when the printing-press, marvellous in its productive capacity, is kept busy day and night to supply the universal thirst for reading matter, when a vitiated taste calls for something new every week, when millions have developed an abnormal taste for the sordid, the sensational and sensual in literature, and other forms of art, in this grossly material and madly commercial age, the Bible, with its spiritual message and divine idealism, far outsells every other book ancient and modern, new or old, in the world. Here are a few concrete facts:

The ninety-third annual report of the American Bible Society, being the report for the year 1909, shows that the Society issued 2,153,028 copies of the Word of God from its various agencies during that year, and that the total issues by this Society alone in ninety-three years amount to *eighty-four million, four hundred and sixty-nine thousand, three hundred and fifty-one copies.* The figures for 1910 have since come to hand, and show that this last year the American Bible Society issued 2,082,831 copies, making the total issues during ninety-four years amount to EIGHTY-SEVEN million, two hundred and ninety-six thousand copies of the Holy Scriptures. Of the total number for 1910, 984,325 were in the English language, and Scriptures were issued during that same year in seventy other lan-

guages. In Japan, in 1909, the Rev. Henry Loomis reports a total of 80,022 volumes issued and circulated, containing either the whole or parts of the Bible. In China, the Rev. Dr. Hykes reports the circulation of the Bible that year to have been 594,952 copies. In Korea, India, the Philippines, and other Oriental countries, a similar record was made. According to the Rev. Clayton Sedgewick Cooper, the Bible Societies of eight nations published, in 1909, 11,378,854 Bibles. More copies of the Bible were sold than of any other hundred books of the world combined. The Oxford Press turns out 20,000 Bibles in a week. The British and Foreign Bible Society prints the Bible in 400 languages, and issued that same year the unprecedented number of 6,620,024 copies of the Old and New Testa-

ments. It has been impossible, says the head of one of the greatest Bible firms of the world, to supply the demand. It was feared that the Boxer war in China would drive the Bible from the Empire, yet last year more than half a million Bibles were placed in the hands of the Chinese. In our own country, the Bible easily outsells all the "best sellers" in fiction every month of the year, every year in the decade, every decade in the century. Yet it has hardly any of the qualities that make those books popular. Modern fiction writers seek to voice some popular sentiment, some accepted maxim, and if they strike some chord that yields a general response, the book will sell. Not much of popular fiction is also sound, wholesome, sane, safe; much of it is sordid, morbid, over-strained, unnatural. But it panders to the popu-

lar craving for sensation. The Bible does none of this. It serenely holds the mirror up to nature, keeps to its ancient standards, speaks with a tone that suggests eternity; its message is unspeakably solemn for a frivolous age like ours; yet it outsells and outlasts all the popular favorites. A successful novel may have a circulation of 50,000 copies in a single year. The Bible has that circulation every day.

But another circumstance deserves special attention. The Bible is not only the most popular book among the masses. It not only appeals to the simple and illiterate; not only is it in demand among the deeply religious and among Christian workers. It is read by the scientific, the literary, the scholarly. It is a vital factor in college and university life. Scholarship finds here its most inex-

haustible theme, its most alluring task. The students of the world, the men who will be leaders of thought and life a few years hence, are turning to the Bible in increasing numbers. During the year 1909-10, 80,000 college men were studying the Bible in voluntary Bible classes. In 539 institutions of learning in America, 32,251 students were enrolled in voluntary Bible classes. To these must be added the 8,977 theological students in 167 institutions in the United States and Canada who are studying the Bible in preparation for the Christian ministry. Thousands of others are taking up Bible study in connection with home and foreign missionary organizations, in the various young people's societies, to say nothing of that innumerable company, who, attracted by the discovery of the inspirational

value of the Bible, are joining this unexampled modern movement for Bible study. The Baracca movement, with the avowed purpose of interesting the ordinary young men of the land in Bible study, reports a Bible class membership of 350,000 young men. The phenomenal growth of the adult Bible class movement in the Sunday Schools of the land is another factor in showing the enormous popularity of the Bible. In India, in China, in Japan, the Bible study movement is enlisting increasing numbers of students in the various colleges and universities.

The Bible has been translated into more than 500 languages and dialects. It has been translated into nearly all the great languages of the earth, all the languages spoken by 10,000,000 or more, so that now eight-tenths of the human race can

have the Word of God in their native tongue. That fact alone speaks volumes for the vitality, the universality of the Bible. It is the one universal Book as attested by the proven fact of its translatability into every language of our race.

No other religious document can be compared with it in this respect. The books of the great Oriental sages and of the founders of the great ethnic religions of the Orient are limited by racial characteristics. They lack universal adaptability. Above all they lack the ethical tone necessary for universal fitness. Many years ago Professor Max Mueller, the great Sanscrit scholar, published an English version of the ancient books of the Hindus. He was instantly charged with unfairness for having issued a garbled version. Prof.

Mueller frankly acknowledged the charge but pleaded in justification that the omitted passages were not translatable and were of such a character that they could not be issued under English or American copyright laws. Mahomet solemnly prohibited the translation of the Koran into other tongues. It was never intended for any but the Arabic world. The Bible, however, finds its way into every tongue, and into every land, and goes round the world with undiminished virility, purity and beauty. Written, like most of the other sacred books of the world in the great languages of the East, in Hebrew, the language of the great religionists of Western Asia, and in Greek, the language of the classic glory of Southern Europe, it has even in its literary purity and

flexibility the capacity for universal conquest.

Not only is the Bible translated into every tongue, but it maintains its literary purity, its moral excellence, its spiritual tone, its peculiar clearness and simplicity, undiminished in every speech which it acquires. This is not true of any other great classic. Homer, and Demosthenes, translated into English, lose some of the lofty beauty of the original Greek; Goethe and Schiller, translated into English, lose much of the peculiar strength of the original German; Shakespeare and Milton lose some of the perspicacity of the English original when translated into German or French. These and other books, ancient and modern, have been translated into perhaps a score of modern tongues, but no one denies the superiority of the

original. No writers but those of the Bible have been able to speak the language of universal humanity with such sustained intelligibility.

But more amazing still: The translation of the Bible has taxed to the utmost the capacity of the most flexible language of the most advanced culture of modern or ancient times. Its vocabulary, to be commensurate with its wealth of ideas and the scope of its themes, is greater than that of any other literature. The vocabulary of the English Bible includes some 15,000 words, while Shakespeare has but 9,000 and Milton less than 8,000 words. Therefore the Bible enriches every language in which it speaks. It purifies the purest diction; it chastens the severest logic; it dignifies the stateliest periods; it gives larger meaning to the richest words; it throws the mystic halo of infinite

suggestiveness around the simplest terms. Linguistic scholarship is inspired to its utmost skill in giving the truths of the Bible their most classical expression. Only golden chariots of classicism are worthy to carry the royal truth of God. Hence in every language of our modern civilization the Bible is the standard of the best usage. Lexicographers and philologists, as well as rhetoricians and literary artists find in the Bible the purest examples of the high art of literary accuracy and fulness. The English Bible is the unchallenged standard of the best English. The German Bible is the best example of pure German. The same is true of the French Bible in its relation to French literature. The noblest oratory, the finest essay, the purest prose and the highest poetry alike owe their excellence to their

conformity to biblical standards, and derive their finest sentences from the inexhaustible storehouse of the Word of God.

In the case of the languages of savage tribes and races, they owe the fact they have acquired a written language at all to the fact that it was necessary to give them the Bible. Christian missionaries with laborious patience reduced these poverty-stricken languages to grammatical system, and enriched them with thousands of new words in order to secure an adequate vehicle for the utterance of the Word of God in those languages, whose paucity and crudity had to be overcome for this sole purpose. And, whether translated into the highly developed languages of civilization or the crude and simple speech of savages, it was often necessary to give new mean-

ing to old and familiar words to express the ideas of revelation. St. Paul vastly enriched the glorious Greek in its classic glory, in his epistles. The boasted wealth of the Chinese syllabary was found utterly inadequate to express all the truth of the New Testament. In short, as Henry Rogers observes, "The Bible is not such a book as man would have made if he could, or could have made if he would." Yet so unselfish has this scholarly labor been, that the Bible is the cheapest book on the market. In the 13th century a Bible cost £30, which was more than the cost of two arches of London Bridge, and as much as the entire earnings of a laboring man for fifteen years. Today the entire Bible may be obtained for 16 cents, and the New Testament for 6 cents.

John Ruskin declares, "It is the grandest group of writings in the world, put into the grandest language of the world; translated afterward into every language of the Christian world; and is the guide of all the arts and acts which have been noble, fortunate and happy."

In face of these facts, the extent of its circulation, and the vital grip it has upon men and nations is nothing less than supernatural. We point out a few of the manifest reasons for this extraordinary popularity of the Bible.

1. It took a long time to complete the Bible. It was not written in a day, a month, a year. From the time when Moses wrote Genesis, to the time when John wrote Revelation, sixteen centuries elapsed. During all of that time, speaking generally, "God at sundries times and in diverse

manners spake unto us" by prophets, poets, sages, biographers and historians. It is the sifted wisdom of ages, the garnered truth of many centuries of inspiration. God wanted to give us a book that would last for ever, a book that would endure "till the heavens be no more," a book on which you could grind the universe to powder, a book that could project itself into the deepest problems of human life. He took time to complete it; therefore it endures. No wonder "it has outlived all conflicts and survived all changes." No wonder it has survived every attack which power, eloquence and even scholarship have made upon it. No wonder it has stood unmoved amid the thunders of war and the ravages of time. Beza says: "God's Word is an anvil which has worn out many a hammer."

Most of the books of the day are written in a few months. They are the product of high-pressure literary activity, and are usually written for a mercenary purpose. The brightest of them become the favorites of a month or of several months, then pass into oblivion and give place to new favorites. They are ephemeral, the insects of a day. The Bible lives forever because it is the product of ages.

2. The Bible lasts because it deals with eternity. It deals with the questions of the day and the problems of this life from the view-point of eternity. It carries the suggestion of the infinite on every page. It appeals to the immortal spark in the human breast. It does not deal with trifles, except as they have their place in the cosmos. It utters with absolute assurance and authority truths that,

though they be ancient, have vital application to the latest phases of life.

With its eye fixed on eternity, this old Book anticipates every advance of human exploration and discovery. There are some who imagine that the Bible is out of date, antiquated. But the fact is this Book, though the oldest in the world, is also the newest. So far from being relegated to antiquity by the advance of science and our many-sided modern research, the Bible has anticipated the discovery of every essential truth. The so-called disagreements between science and the Bible are really disagreements between the speculative and unproven theories of science and the teachings of the Bible. Whenever science reaches final conclusions, and unquestionable, established facts, she is in exact harmony with the Bible

rightly understood and correctly interpreted. The Bible unscientific? Say rather that immature science in its empirical stages is unscriptural. Science is continually changing front. Even its most cherished tenets are ever undergoing a subtle metamorphosis. Evolution, as a theory of the universe, has held sway for an unusual length of time, but the doctrine of evolution, as held now, in the first decade of the twentieth century is vastly different from the doctrine promulgated with so much popular applause a generation ago by such great leaders as Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall and others. The doctrine of evolution, stripped of its false assumptions, and with the element of speculation to some extent eliminated, may to-day be so conceived as not at all in conflict with a sane interpretation of the Word

of God. The Bible was the first to proclaim evolution as a method of creative operation, but with God behind it.

No, no! The Bible is not yet out of date. The fact is that upon some very important points, it will take science another thousand years to overtake this old Book. The Bible is in the lead. Its beacon shines on every rock-bound, wave-washed coast long before any vessel needs it. It sets the pace, and it is the real inspiration and dynamic of all true progress. The Bible illustrates well the poet's lines:

> "Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again,
> The eternal years of God are hers."

It is the eternal book, the product of infinity, unshaken by the vicissitudes of time, giving stability to character, and permanence to the most transcendent ideals. Yet it must be re-

membered that it does not purport to teach any science but the science of religion; not the science of matter but of spirit. It does not deal with temporalities except as they are related to eternity. It soars far above the sordid atmosphere of time and space and sense, and revels in the limitless fields of eternal truth.

3. The Bible endures because it is *true to human nature.* True in everything else, it is true here as well. Here is a book that knows the human heart as no other book knows it. It searches the deepest mysteries of our lives and brings them to light. All our hidden springs are revealed, and nothing is hid from the heat thereof. Mr. F. Stanley Arnot, of Africa, says that when missionaries read the Bible aloud to the native Africans, and then ask, "Is this God's book?" the reply is, "Yes, that must be God's Word,

for no white man ever knew so much about us!"

Take biblical biography — and much of the Bible is biographical. Ordinarily, in general literature, biographies are written by friends, admirers, adherents. It takes a hero worshipper to write an acceptable biography of a man. Such was Boswell, who in his Life of Doctor Johnson produced the model biography in English literature. That biography, however, overflows with fulsome flattery, and glitters with ardent eulogium. Accordingly most biographies are unfair, and untrue. They magnify the virtues and minimize or suppress the vices and defects of character. To that extent they are worthless and misleading. But in the Bible we have the most merciless vivisection of character. Here we have, in part, the life story of di-

vine favorites,—Abraham, the friend of God, Moses, the man of God, David, the man after God's own heart. Yet how mercilessly the sins, weaknesses, failings of these men are laid bare! Abraham's duplicity, Moses' impatience, David's adultery and murder! No mincing matters, no palliation, no excuse, no apology, only plain, simple, unvarnished truth about men who enjoyed the special favor of God, whom He chose for conspicuous service, placed in pivotal positions in the world's unfolding history.

This book speaks the truth concerning human sin, human depravity, human baseness, human selfishness, human wickedness, human weakness, human need. But it also touches the secret springs of hope and life. It does portray man as a sinner, but it also shows him his Saviour. It

discovers to us the simple philosophy of eternal happiness in one word: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." It discloses to struggling souls the One Ideal Life, and offers to our paralyzed souls the inspiration of a new affection. It pours into weary, heavy laden souls the sweet and cheering message, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." It knows not only the sin of the heart, but the need of the heart and makes both kown. Nowhere is there a word in palliation of evil, not a syllable to gloss over the ugly hideousness of sin, but unqualified condemnation, a scorching flame that burns and consumes unrighteousness. It turns the microscope upon the subtleties of evil. Many of its chapters pour vials of wrath upon the sins of the age, like rivers of livid lava belching forth

with volcanic fury. Then after the storm, the earthquake and the fire, bells of heaven pour forth melodies of cheer and hope.

William E. Gladstone says of it: "If I am asked, 'What is the remedy for the deepest sorrows of the heart —what should a man look to, in his progress through life, to enable him manfully to confront his afflictions?' I must point him to something which in a well-known hymn is called 'The old, old story,' told in an old, old book, which is the greatest and best gift, to mankind. . . . All the wonders of Greek civilization heaped together are less wonderful than the simple book of the Psalms, the history of the human soul in relation to its Maker."

4. A noble dignity, a sublime simplicity marks the manner of the book. It never "crawls in the dust," and never indulges in "incoherent

rhapsody," as Gibbon says of the Koran. Channing exclaimed: "The age of its birth, its freedom from earthly mixture, its unborrowed solitary grandeur; these are to me strong indications of its divine descent. I can not reconcile them with human origin." The loftiest spirits venerate it, the purest love it, the most cultured obey it. It moves on a plane so lofty and pure that it scarcely if ever could or does borrow from other literatures, and then only to give a holier meaning to the few borrowed phrases it contains. Yet the richest literature of our civilization is enriched by what it borrows from the Bible. It is said there are in Lord Tennyson's works no less than four hundred and sixty quotations from or allusions to the Bible. John Ruskin says: "All I have taught of Art, everything that I have written, whatever greatness

there has been in any thought of mine, whatever I have done in my life, I owe to what my mother taught me in the Bible. It is the grandest group of writings in the world, put into the grandest language of the world; translated afterward into every language of Christendom, and is the guide of all the arts and acts of that world which have been noble, fortunate or happy."

5. All the noblest products of the Christian ages and races derive their incentive, their inspiration and their ideals from the Bible. In architecture, the most elaborate, graceful and costly structures in Europe are the Christian cathedrals, whose mighty domes and lofty arches and heaven-piercing spires and gorgeous windows are but efforts of consecrated genius to set forth in stone the infinite thoughts of God expressed in

the Bible. All the supreme masterpieces of art, whether made by chisel or brush, are devoted to biblical themes. Michael Angelo's "Moses" in marble, and "The Last Judgment" in fresco; Raphael's "Madonna" in Dresden, and "The Transfiguration" in the Vatican; Hoffman's "Christ and the Doctors," Munkacsy's "Christ on Calvary" and "Christ before Pilate," are examples of how the greatest artistic geniuses of the world required biblical themes to call forth the best that was in them. In music, Handel's "Messiah," and Haydn's "Creation," show that the loftiest is produced only when the highest genius works upon Bible themes.

6. The unity of the Bible is one of its chief glories. Dr. Robert S. MacArthur pertinently says:

"The Bible is a unit. One thought pervades it from Genesis to Revelation. One dominant purpose underlies prophecy and history, parable and poem. Although it took 1,600 years to write the Bible, and although perhaps forty human writers, representing all degrees of social life, intellectual culture and spiritual attainment, were employed in this sacred composition, still a complete unity marks the entire book. There is, indeed, a great difference between the Psalms of David and the Epistles of Paul; but it is the difference between the moon showing us a crescent of her disk and the moon in the fulness of her beauty; it is the difference between the gray dawn of the morning and the splendor of noonday. One thought pervades the book as the diapason pervades, unifies and dominates a great oratorio.

"The unity of the Bible, considering the manner of its human origin, is one of its great wonders and one of its divine beauties. If we deny its divine inspiration, it seems impossible to account for its historic and spiritual unity. The charm of this unity grows upon us the more we study the sacred records. This unity is internal rather than external, essential and not accidental, spiritual rather than merely literary.

"It is delightful to note this unity in the harmony which marks considerable sections of the Bible. The first three chapters and the last three chapters of the Bible show a harmonious unity to a remarkable degree. Those who have never studied these six chapters with the thought of their harmony in mind will be surprised and delighted at its discovery. In the first three chapters of Genesis

we have the first heaven and the first earth ruined by the sin of man. In the last three chapters of Revelation we have an account of a new heaven and a new earth, the tabernacle of God being with men. In Genesis we had the victory of the tempter; in Revelation we have his utter overthrow and his eternal doom. In that first section in Genesis we had paradise lost; in the last section of Revelation we have paradise regained. In the first section of Genesis we had Adam with his new-found bride, and both of them tempted and fallen; in the last section of Revelation we have the second Adam with his holy and blessed bride, the Church, forever safe and glorious. In the earlier section we have death and misery. In the later Scripture we have life and felicity.

"In the beginning of the New Testament, as in the beginning of the Old Testament, we have the holy and blessed Immanuel, God with us; and in Revelation the crowning joy of the redeemed in their consciousness of God's presence, their rapturous realization of God once again as Immanuel. This presence is the grand cosummation, the glorious triumph, the blessed victory won by the 'Strong Son of God.' "

If we seek for the point of its unity, we find it not in a principle, not in a doctrine, not in a word, but in A PERSON; Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the unifying factor. In Him Old Testament and New agree; in Him Law and Gospel are one. Prophecy and history, prose and poetry, priesthood and sacrifice, temple and altar, alike find their vital fire in Him. His Figure overshadows all the great

characters of this mighty Book; His Spirit permeates its writers; His coming inspires them; His Presence vitalizes its precepts and its commandments. He steps upon the scene on the very heels of sin; the Saviour seeks at once the fallen earthly wanderer. This transcendent Man walks with a conqueror's tread through all its tragic story, breathes upon its typology a living breath. And when the Sacred Canon closes, its last chapters glow with the radiance of His Face, supreme in Revelation, in Providence, in Redemption. There He stands. Hell and Death are overcome; the grave is robbed of victory, sin is conquered. His crucified feet are on the necks of His enemies. He holds the seven stars in His right hand. The ages are His. The Christ of the Bible reigns, the Bible of the Christ is the scepter of His reign.

6. One of the marvels of the Bible is its condensation, its brevity. What infinite meaning and power are sometimes expressed in its simple sentences. Centuries in a paragraph, dynasties in a sentence, revolutions in a phrase. Nothing is superfluous; there is no redundancy, no pandering to idle curiosity; no display of curious details to gratify the morbid. The silences of the Scripture are quite as sublime, quite as significant, quite as illuminating as its utterances. For through the whole "one increasing purpose runs." Only what is truly essential to that purpose is inserted; the non-essential is eliminated; or, if recognized at all, is subordinated as it should be. The perspective that results, is like that of a perfect picture by a Raphael, a Turner, a Corregio. It is like the vast and beautiful Cathedral at Co-

logne, where every line and arch of that infinitely delicate facade fits into the whole scheme, including the twin spires in all their graceful proportions Take the four Gospel narratives of our Saviour's life, the most unapproachable biographies ever written, and contrast them with the puerilities of the so-called apocryphal or mythical stories of the Matchless Life. In the words of another: "Our Gospels present us with a glorious picture of a mighty Saviour, the mythic Gospels with a contemptible one. In our Gospels He exhibits a superhuman wisdom; in the mythic ones a nearly equal superhuman absurdity. In our Gospels He is arrayed in the beauty of holiness; in the mythic ones this quality is altogether wanting. Our Gospels exhibit to us a sublime morality; not one ray of it shines in those of the

mythologists." As Professor Moorehead says, "The distance between the Gospels of the New Testament and the pseudo-gospels is measured by the distance between the product of the Spirit of God, and that of the fallen human mind."

We can not do better than here quote Professor Moorehead upon the contrast between the Gospel narratives and the uninspired modern "Lives of Christ." He takes the four most conspicuous of these Lives—namely Andrews', Geike's, Hanna's, Edersheim's. "The authors of the Gospels had no models on which to frame their work. The path they trod had never before been pressed by human feet." Whereas the authors of these modern "Lives" had at their disposal a wealth of information and literature. But let them be compared as to size. Andrews'

book contains 615 pages; Geikie's over 1,200; Hanna's over 2,100, Edersheim's 1,500 pages. The four combined have 5,490 pages. It would take months to read them all through but once. But in Bagster's Bible, the Four Gospels take but 82 pages; in the Oxford 104; in the American Revision 120. In the Bagster, Matthew has 23 pages, Mark 13, Luke 25, John 21. Less than 100 pages of the Gospels, against more than 5,400 of the four modern "Lives."

"Countless volumes, great and small, in the form of exposition, notes, harmony, history, are written on these brief records. How happens it that such stores of wisdom and knowledge lie garnered in these short pieces? Who taught the evangelists this power of expansion and contraction, of combination and separation, of revelation in the words

and more revelation below the words? What taught them so to describe the person and work of the Lord Jesus that the description satisfies the most illiterate and the most learned? Whence did they derive their infinite skill in grouping together events, discourses, and actions in such fashion that it vividly sets before us the deathless beauty of a perfect Life? There is but one answer: The Spirit of the living God filled their minds with His unerring wisdom and controlled their speech. To men, unaided by Him, it was impossible. But when Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the product can and will be such as we see it to be in these matchless records."

This life of Jesus is the supreme factor in the Book. It is the vital element that pervades the entire

Book with the irresistible charm of the most lovable of all personalities. Love, interpreted in the life and character of Jesus, is the deathless Light that illumines all these pages. The Love Story of "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," is the secret of the hold this Book has upon the heart of mankind. The Personality of Jesus glorifies, vitalizes this Book. He lives in the Book, the Book lives in Him.

It is my conviction that I have said enough to show first that the Bible is the most popular book in the world, and, second, why it is the most popular book in the world. There is but one thing more to say: To quote the words of another: "How comes it that this volume, composed by rude men in a rude age, when art and science were but in their childhood, has exerted more influence on the human mind and on the social

system, than all other books put together? Whence comes it that this book has achieved such marvelous changes in the opinions of mankind, has banished idol worship, has abolished infanticide, has put down polygamy and divorce, has exalted the condition of woman, raised the standard of public morality, created for families that blessed thing, a Christian home, and caused its other triumphs by causing benevolent institutions, open and expansive, to spring up, as with the wand of enchantment? What sort of a book is this that even the winds and waves of human passion obey it? What other engine of social improvement has operated so long, and yet lost none of its virtue? Since it appeared, empire after empire has been launched on the tide of time, and

gone down, leaving no trace upon the shore. But this book is still going about doing good, leavening society with its holy principles, cheering the sorrowful with its consolations, strengthening the tempted, encouraging the penitent, calming the troubled spirit, and smoothing the pillow of death. Can such a book be the offspring of human genius?"

There is but one way to account for it. And this is the final reason for the enduring popularity of the Bible. IT IS THE WORD OF GOD. It is not a book of human origin. IT IS THE WORD OF GOD TO MAN. It is in very truth a "human document" of surpassing charm and power, but it is more still—the divine document, of life-giving power and undying significance. Well does John Dryden, one of England's popular poets, say:

"Whence but from Heaven could men unskilled
in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths, or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price."

And Thomas Carlyle exclaims, referring to the Bible:

"A noble book! All men's book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem—man's destiny, and God's ways with him on earth; and all in such free-flowing outlines—grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody, and repose of reconcilement."

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